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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCV #0422 0871551
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 271551Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0856
INFO RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RUEHSC/AMEMBASSY MINSK 0025
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0309

UNCLAS CARACAS 000422

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MCAP](#) [PTER](#) [BO](#) [RS](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ARMS ARRIVE IN VENEZUELA, AIR DEFENSE
PLANNED

REF: 2007 CARACAS 02010

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Nineteen shipping containers carrying Russian made ammunition for AK-103 assault rifles were transferred from Puerto Cabello to Maracay under heavy security on March 25 according to local media. General Alejandro Tineo of the 41st Armored Division added that the shipment included machinery for the Venezuelan rifle factory expected to open in 2009. Local dailies also reported that the Belarus parliament commenced debate to ratify an agreement signed by Presidents Chavez and Lukashenko for Belarus to provide an integrated air defense system. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) More than 100 soldiers, intelligence officials and state police provided security to 19 tractor trailers hauling ammunition and machine tools to the headquarters of Venezuela's state arms manufacturer CAVIM in Maracay. The convoy traveled March 25 from Puerto Cabello as a helicopter gunship flew overhead. General Alejandro Tineo of the of the 41st Armored Division explained that the ammunition was for the 100,000 AK-103 assault rifles purchased earlier and that the containers also held machine tools for the CAVIM AK-103 factory under construction in Ciudad Jardin. The general added that although the cornerstone had been laid, (Reftel) the factory was not expected to be operational until next year.

¶3. (SBU) Local media also reported that the Belarus parliament had begun debate on the ratification of an arms agreement signed between Presidents Chavez and Lukashenko in ¶2007. Specifically, the two leaders reportedly agreed to plan, build, install and train Venezuelan personnel in the use of an integrated air defense radar system to accompany Russian S-300 "GARGOYLE" and Tor M-1 "GAUNTLET" missiles Venezuela plans to acquire.

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